

Accessibility Plan

Policy Owner:	Mrs N Discombe
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Introduction

Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities." The SEN and Disability Act (2001) extended the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to cover education.

Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled pupils under Part Four of the DDA:

- Not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage.
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled students.

This duty requires schools/academies to produce an Accessibility Plan that identifies the action the school/academy intends to take over a three year period to increase access for those with a disability in three key areas, is published and evaluated periodically. The three areas include:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the Academy curriculum.
- Improving the environment of the Academy to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

In addition, the Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires all schools/academies to:

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA.
- Eliminate harassment of those with a disability.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled individuals.
- Take steps to take account of disabilities even if this involves treating disabled persons more favourably.

This duty requires schools/academies to

- Involve those with a disability in producing a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and Action Plan.
- Publish the DES/Action Plan.

- Demonstrate they have taken action identified to achieve outcomes.
- Report on progress, review and revise the DES annually

This plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). It draws on the guidance set out in "Accessible schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils", issued by DfES in July 2002.

At all times the Academy will also be equally aware of the needs of disabled staff, parents and visitors.

Key Objectives

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the Academy community for students and prospective students with a disability.
- To provide a safe, caring and friendly environment. All staff will give particular regard to the Academy's Safeguarding policy when working with students with a disability.
- To provide resources to cater for the needs of the individual Students.
- To promote an understanding of disabilities throughout the Academy and an awareness of the needs of students with a disability.

Principles

- Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the Academy's aims, equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the Academy's SEN policy;
- The Academy recognises its duty under the DDA (as amended by the SENDA):
 - not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
 - not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
 - to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage
 - to publish an Accessibility Plan.
- In performing their duties, governors and staff will have regard to the DRC Code of Practice (2002);
- The Academy recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on

- his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality;
- The Academy provides all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles; and endorses the key principles in the National Curriculum framework, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
 - setting suitable learning challenges
 - responding to students' diverse learning needs
 - overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

All staff will be able to meet more fully the needs of disabled students with regards to accessing the curriculum.

Activity

a) Education & related activities

The Academy will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEN inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts etc. Within the curriculum, the Academy aims to provide a full access to all elements. Specifically, in all areas of Information & Communication Technology, the Academy will have consideration in planning facilities for:

- Wheelchair access
- Screen reader software
- Screen magnifier software for the visually impaired
- Features such as sticky keys and filter keys to aid disabled users in using a keyboard .
- Screen Magnifier Software.

To develop communication skills in students, enabling them to express thoughts and opinions successfully through speech, writing and sign language as appropriate.

To give advice and support in curriculum subjects as appropriate, to enable disabled students to participate successfully in lessons within the mainstream Academy.

To ensure that the needs of all disabled students and staff are represented within the Academy.

To create positive images of disability within the Academy so that students grow into adults who have some understanding of the needs of disabled people.

b) Physical environment

The Academy will take account of the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings.

c) Provision of information

The Academy will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested etc.

Action Plan

The Plan will be monitored through the Finance & General Purposes Committee of the Governors. The plan is of necessity organic and will need adaptation and additions on a regular basis. Additionally, the Academy will always endeavour to:

- Improve availability of written material in alternative forms
- Improve working environment for students with visual impairment by incorporating appropriate colour schemes when refurbishing and install blinds on south-facing windows

Linked Policies

This Plan will contribute to the review and revision of related Academy policies, e.g.

- Premises Management Policy
- Equal Opportunities policies
- Curriculum Policies
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Asset Management Plan
- Prospectus and Mission Statement
- Teaching and Learning
- Safeguarding Policy